

THE UNCLE PETE COLUMN

NEWS FROM THE UNDERGROUND

Forget that lion and lamb stuff. To those in the know, March comes in like an Uncle Pete Column and goes out, well... like another Uncle Pete Column is about to happen.

A big day in local broadcasting occurred last month. On February 4th, WHRW-FM (90.5 on the dial) celebrated the 28th anniversary of the station's first broadcast. In addition to the anniversary, this day also marked the first day of operation of WHRW's brand new transmitter, replacing the old lovable but long-ailing transmitter that had been in use since 1968.

WHRW, historically the area's third FM station, originated as a carrier current station in 1962. The station was granted on-air status by the FCC in 1965 and was transmitting at a power rating of 10 watts by February 1966. In 1974, a higher power rating was approved. By early 1975, a new transmitter was inaugurated and remained in use until Friday afternoon, February 4, 1994.

Thanks go out to all the students and community members whose contributions made this possible. And a special thanks to all the members (and former members) of **Sirenflower**, **Abalienation**, and **The Meat Dept.** who performed at the first (and only) WHRW Benefit Concert in late 1991 (organized by yours truly and former WHRW program director Mike Newmark). The new transmitter was a long time coming and here's hoping its beacon shines brightly for at least another 28 years.

Ever wonder why stores with names like Record Town, Record Theater, and Tower Records (and other places listed in the phone book as record stores) don't sell records? The most common response I've gotten over the years is "They don't make vinyl anymore." Well, this wasn't true five years ago and it's not true today. In fact, not only does it still exist but there appears to be a resurgence in the amount of music being released on vinyl.

I've always known that vinyl production has never ceased (although it has decreased) but the extent to which vinyl records are still being produced became evident recently as I was inquiring whether the new **Ramones** album, **Acid Eaters**, had been released on vinyl. I found that not only was this album available on vinyl, but their previous album, **Mondo Bizarro**, had also been released on vinyl. And it doesn't stop there.

The new **Soundgarden** album is out on vinyl as are the latest albums by fellow Seattle bands **Nirvana** and **Pearl Jam**. Everyone on **Estrus Records** (e.g. - **Mummies**, **Fall-Outs**, **Mono-Men**) is released on vinyl. In fact, the **Mummies** are released strictly on vinyl. The new album **Mellow Gold** by **Beck**, containing the hit **Loser** (not to be confused with the classic **Meat Dept.** song **You're Such A Loser**) was released, according to Beck, "on vinyl, as God intended music to be recorded". Other new vinyl releases include **DOA - Loggerheads**, **Neurosis - Enemy Of The Sun**, and

Tori Amos - Under The Pink. Last month's **Music Press** contained an ad for the **Kanami's Banafish** album available on vinyl. And how many of you **Primus** fans know **Pork Soda** came out as a double album?

It's not only underground or "alternative" artists who are coming out on vinyl either. Some of the big names in rock who have new releases on vinyl include **Aerosmith** (**Amazing EP**), **Black Sabbath** (**Cross Purposes**), **Iron Maiden** (**Live At Donnington** triple album), and the **Rolling Stones** (**Jump Back - Best Of 1972-1992**). Even the **Beavis And Butthead Experience** album is out on vinyl (and also on picture disc).

Not only are 12" albums still around but most independent labels (e.g. - **Cargo**, **Amphetamine Reptile**) put out numerous 7" singles.

So what's the difference between records and CD's anyway? The main difference is in the way they record and reproduce sound. Records use an analog process.

That means they take the smooth continuous incoming sound wave and record it as a smooth continuous wave so it can be played back as a smooth continuous sound wave. All natural sounds occur in this manner. CD's use a digital process. That means they take the smooth continuous wave and chop it up into tiny little pieces (with little gaps between the pieces). These pieces are converted into a series of zeros and ones so they can be recorded and replayed by the use of an electronic microchip which decodes the 0's and 1's into sound again. These sounds are sent to your speakers that produce analog waves that you can hear. But it's not the same as an analog wave from a record because the digital process leaves tiny little gaps in the sound waves that weren't there when the music was first played (with the exception of digitally produced sounds).

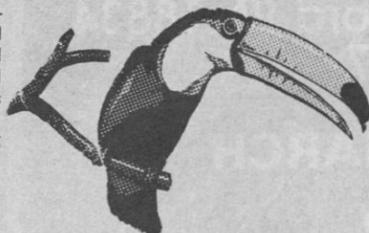
Just another case of the music industry trying to breast-... settle for it though. There's still vinyl out there, it just takes a little more work to get it now.

And next time you're in a CD/cassette only store, ask them where the records are. If enough people bug them maybe record stores will actually be that again.

O, to flip through stacks of new records again.....

Celebrity birthdays: Mark "Hardly Normal" Horvath (Casey, Mr. Jiffy, Blowfish, Zarley) - March 13; and of course, that well known DJ and music columnist, Uncle Pete - March 23.

Well that's it for now. Happy St. Patrick's Day! Happy Easter! And most of all, until next time...have a good one!!!



but more often than not it's because of this lack of surface noise. But records produce a fuller, warmer sound. This is especially evident for acoustic instruments that wind up sounding like digitally sampled instruments on a CD. For this reason, most jazz and classical music is still available on record. In addition, there have been a variety of studies of late indicating that prolonged exposure to digitally recorded music results in increased stress and nervousness in the listener.

Besides the sound, some of the advantages of vinyl are found in their size. Next to the music, the most important thing about an album is the cover. A lot of albums have very creative and intense cover art. CD's give you a little 4 1/2" by 4 1/2" cover with tiny little pictures, tiny little credits, and tiny little lyrics. Records give a full 12" by 12" picture with full size words and often more artwork than CD's. And what about posters? Records have frequently been found to contain full size wall posters. The best a CD ever contains is something on the order of a magazine picture. And I'm sure that those of you who have ever held a record in your hands can think of a few other things that you can do on and with a record jacket that you can't do with a small (and very fragile) CD case. You can have your little 4 1/2" - I'll stick with my full 12" anytime.

Why can't you find new vinyl in most places in this area? Most stores have so totally converted to CD and cassette displays that they don't have space for vinyl anymore. By decreasing the amount of vinyl in stock over the years they've convinced themselves that nobody buys vinyl anymore. Sure, if you can't find it you can't buy it. The only store in town that will generally help you get records is Music City, and even they don't stock most of what's available.

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Mountain

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New York City and the jury just couldn't care less.

MP: Tell me about what you've been doing lately.

LW: This year, starting in April, I played on Billy Joel's new album, I had a live album, and I put out my new CD, *Dodging the Dirt*, which my good friend Howard Stern named for me. You know what "Dodging the Dirt" means, Ben?

MP: To me it sounds like it would mean getting out of the way of all those fanzines and newspapers...

LW: It's really about when they're throwing that dirt on you in your grave... Howard felt that I'd "ducked the grave" a few times, so... *Dodging the Dirt*.

I also did cut on a tribute album to Stevie Ray Vaughan and one on a tribute to Albert King, plus putting together the box set.

MP: How did you come to work with Billy Joel?

LW: When I was in the Vagrants on Long Island (a long, long time ago), Billy was in the Hassles, and they used to open for us. Anyway, I got a call in April from him, and my wife said, "Billy Joel's on the phone," and I said, "Billy-joe who?" But it was him, and he told me he had a song that was right up my alley, and I ended up playing on four cuts on the album. It was great; a lot of people don't realize that Billy Joel can rock. He just doesn't do it on some of the songs that he does.

MP: You've got guitarist Steve Hunter playing with you on *Dodging the Dirt*. Didn't he do some work with Lou Reed?

LW: He did all that stuff; he's played with Peter Gabriel, Alice Cooper, David Lee Roth. He's my favorite guitarist. People ask me, "why did you use another lead guitarist on the CD," and the thing is that Steve makes me play better. We did this "Night of the Guitars" thing in Europe with twenty guitar players: Alvin Lee, Steve Howe, myself, Robbie Krieger from the Doors. They showed me some

two parts: first each of us would come out and do three songs by our self. The Climax Blues Band was the backing band, and Miles Copeland took us all over the world; twenty-four countries. And every night before it was my turn to play I'd go down and watch Steve Hunter warm up in the dressing room. The guy is just fantastic. If you want to hear an unbelievable guitar that hardly anyone knows about, check him out.

MP: Any tour plans?

LW: We're going to Europe with Mountain, and I'm doing some dates now with my own band, the Leslie West Band. You know, Mountain's drummer, Corky Laing, is vice president of Polygram Records in Canada now. But he'll be coming out from behind his desk for this tour.



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